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## THE HEBREW IDEA OF THE FUTURE LIFE

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### I. EARLIEST CONCEPTIONS OF THE SOUL

From the earliest period of the Hebrew religion no literary records have come down to us. In lack of direct historical evidence, accordingly, we are compelled to turn to the indirect testimony of comparative religion. Beliefs and rites that existed among all ancient peoples, and that still exist among savages, may safely be regarded as primitive. When these are found also among the Babylonians, Aramaeans, Canaanites, and Arabs, we may conclude that they were a part of primitive Semitic religion. If, now, we find in the Old Testament conceptions that are identical with those of the other Semites and of primitive races throughout the world, we are justified in inferring that these are survivals from the earliest period of the religion of Israel. Applying this method to the study of the Hebrew conception of the future life, we reach the following conclusions:

a) *The distinction between soul and body.*—When men first began to think, they were confronted with the fact of death. Their companion, felled by a blow, or smitten by a disease, lay prostrate before them. In outward appearance he was the same, but he was unconscious of all that they did, and he could not respond either by word or by motion. It was evident even to the most rudimentary intelligence that an invisible something had gone out of the man. Most primitive peoples observed the fact that breathing ceases at death, and therefore identified the vital principle with the breath. In many languages the words for “spirit” denote primarily “breath,” or “wind,” e.g., Skr. *prāna*; Gr., *pneuma*, *anemos*; Lat., *spiritus*, *anima*; Germ. and Eng., *Geist*, *ghost*, which are etymologically connected with *gust*.

This was also the conception of the Semites. For them man consisted of two elements, “flesh” (Heb. *bāsār*) and “breath” (Heb. Phœn. *nefesh*, Arab. *naʾs*, Eth. *naʾās*, Syr. *naʾshā*, Bab. Ass. *naʾpishtu*). The “breath” was the seat of knowledge, appetite, emotion, and

activity; accordingly it was identical with the person. In all the Semitic dialects *na/shî*, "my breath," means "myself." At death the "breath" with all its powers went out of a man. With this primitive Semitic conception of spirit the theology of the Old Testament is in complete agreement.

b) *The continued existence of the disembodied soul.*—Primitive man believed not only in the distinction between soul and body but also in the ability of the soul to survive the catastrophe of death. The paleolithic cave-dwellers of the quaternary period placed with their dead ornaments, implements, arms, and food for use in the other life, and celebrated funeral feasts in their honor. The same was true of the cave-dwellers of the neolithic age.<sup>1</sup> Anthropologists are agreed that no savage race exists which does not believe in some sort of immortality and practice some rites in honor of the dead.<sup>2</sup> In view of these facts it is evident that immortality was one of the original beliefs of our race.

Among the Semites this belief existed from the earliest times. The ancient tombs at Nippur and Tello in Babylonia contain the usual offerings to the dead.<sup>3</sup> In the oldest tombs of Palestine<sup>4</sup> the dead were commonly deposited in the contracted position of an unborn child, in witness to the faith that death was birth into another life; and with them were placed offerings of food and of other useful articles.

According to Wellhausen<sup>5</sup> the Jinn, or "hidden beings" of the Arabs, who were for the most part nature-spirits, also included spirits of the dead. Like other primitive peoples, the pre-Muhammadan Arabs buried the dead with care, provided for their needs in the other world, invoked their assistance, and even swore by their life.<sup>6</sup>

The most ancient Hebrew tombs in Palestine contain precisely the

<sup>1</sup> D'Alviella, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 14-19.

<sup>2</sup> Brinton, *Religions of Primitive Peoples*, p. 69; Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, art. "Ancestor Worship."

<sup>3</sup> Peters, *Nippur*, II, 173; Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization*, p. 686; Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 598 f.

<sup>4</sup> *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*, 1902, pp. 351 ff.; 1903, pp. 14 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Reste arabischen Heidentums*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 148 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 185; Nöldeke, in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, art. "Arabs," p. 672.

same deposits that are found in other Semitic tombs, and bear witness to the same conception of immortality that was held by the other Semitic peoples.<sup>7</sup> According to the Old Testament the *nefesh*, or "breath," persists after death, and *nefesh* is used as the name of the disembodied spirit (cf. Lev. 19:28; 21:1; 21:11; Num. 5:2; 6:6; 6:11; 9:6 f.; 9:10; 19:11 f.; Hag. 2:13). Belief in the continued existence of the dead is strikingly exemplified in the narrative of the appearance of the ghost of Samuel to Saul (I Sam., chap. 28). In view of the antiquity of this belief among the Semites and among other primitive peoples, we may safely conclude that it was held by the Hebrews in the pre-Mosaic period.

c) *Powers lost by the soul in death.*—The identification of the soul with the breath, shadow, reflection, or echo of the living man, led naturally to the conception that it was vague and unsubstantial. Early races and savages have uniformly regarded the soul as a small, feeble being, ordinarily invisible, inaudible, and intangible, that is unable to take care of itself, and that needs to be sheltered and guarded until, so to speak, it "finds itself" in the spirit-world.<sup>8</sup> When Achilles would embrace the shade of Patroclus, it passes through his hands like smoke.<sup>9</sup> In like manner Ulysses finds the shade of his mother wholly unsubstantial.<sup>10</sup> Even the souls of heroes are so feeble that they cannot be roused to activity until they have drunk the fresh, hot blood of victims poured into the sacrificial trench.<sup>11</sup>

The early Semitic conceptions of the soul were closely similar. The names "breath," "wind," "shadow," "echo," that were used for ghosts suggested their ethereal nature. In Babylonian incantations they are described as "wind-gusts."<sup>12</sup> In the Gilgamesh Epic the ghost of Eabani issues "like a wind" out of a hole in the earth.<sup>13</sup>

The Hebrews also thought of the soul as losing its physical powers in parting from the body. For them it was only "breath" or "wind."

<sup>7</sup> *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*, 1904, pp. 328 ff.

<sup>8</sup> D'Alviella, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 78.

<sup>9</sup> *Iliad*, xxiii. 114-22.

<sup>10</sup> *Odyssey*, xi. 252-71.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>12</sup> Thompson, *Devils and Evil Spirits*, I, xxix, 75.

<sup>13</sup> *Gilgamesh Epic*, tablet xii, col. iv; = *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, VI, 263.

The common name for ghosts is *rephaim*, "feeble ones" (Job 26:5; Ps. 88:11 [10]; Prov. 2:18; Isa. 14:9; 26:19). In Isa. 14:10 the ghosts say: "Art thou also become weak as we?" In Ps. 88:4 the sick man says: "I am like to them that go down into the pit; I am as a man that hath no help." According to Isa. 59:10 they "grope as those that have no eyes, and stumble at noon as in the twilight" (cf. Ezek. 26:20 f.). Such statements show that the later Hebrews had inherited from their remote forefathers the general belief of primitive man in the shadowy, unsubstantial nature of disembodied souls.

d) *Powers retained by the soul in death.*—Although, according to the antique conception, the dead lost their physical powers, they lost none of their higher spiritual powers of knowledge, feeling, and will. Ancestors retained a keen interest in their posterity and actively intervened in their affairs. Enemies preserved their original hostility to their foes. The dead were conscious of events that occurred on earth. Those who had met an untimely fate remembered that fact and were unhappy in the other world. The spirits of murdered men, of those that had died in youth, of women that had died in childbirth, and of those that had left no descendants, could not rest. All these classes of troubled ghosts are mentioned repeatedly in Babylonian exorcisms.<sup>14</sup> Among the Arabs the soul of a murdered man was believed to thirst for the blood of his slayer. If his clansmen did not speedily avenge him, he appeared in the form of an owl, crying, "Give me to drink!"<sup>15</sup>

Among the Hebrews the shades are represented as rejoicing at the downfall of the king of Babylon (Isa. 14:9 f.). Pharaoh is comforted when he sees the hosts of the dead that have preceded him (Ezek. 32:31). Rachel mourns over the captivity of her children (Jer. 31:15). From Isa. 63:16 it appears that some of the nation believed that Abraham and Israel continued to care for their descendants. According to I Sam. 28:16-19, Samuel remembers his relations with Saul, and continues to feel concern in the welfare of Israel. The blood of murdered Abel cries to Yahweh from the earth (Gen. 4:10), that is, the soul that resides in the blood is conscious of the wrong done to it and demands vengeance. Compare Job 24:12:

<sup>14</sup> Thompson, *Devils and Evil Spirits*, I, 39 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Nöldeke, in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, art. "Arabs," p. 672.

"From out of the cities the dead groan, and the soul of the slain crieth out"; also Enoch 9:10: "Now, behold, the spirits of the dead cry out, and lament even unto the gates of heaven", and Rev. 6:9, where the souls under the altar cry out: "How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" A father's blessing or curse operates after his death because he himself sees to its fulfilment. Hence the exaggerated reverence for parents and the aged that we find among the ancient Hebrews.

In contrast to these passages, which ascribe to the dead a continuance of those powers of thought and feeling that they enjoyed on earth, another view appears in the later writings of the Old Testament, according to which the dead have lost memory, knowledge, and desire. This view, as we shall see more fully later, was a result of the conflict of the religion of Yahweh against primitive animism and ancestor-worship. The other conception, which ascribed to the dead large powers of thought and feeling, was, as comparative religion shows, the original Hebrew belief.<sup>16</sup>

In ancient times spirits were believed to retain the appearance of their bodies at the time of death. In the *Odyssey* (xi. 50) those who have fallen in battle appear to Ulysses "mangled by the spear and clad in bloody armor." So also among the Hebrews the dead retained the semblance of their former bodies. The ghost of Samuel was recognized by Saul because he appeared as "an old man covered with a robe" (I Sam. 28:14). The kings of the earth still wore their royal apparel and sat on thrones in the other world (Isa. 14:9). The dead of all the different nations were recognizable by their features and their costumes. The warriors "had their weapons of war and laid their swords under their heads." The uncircumcised remained uncircumcised; those pierced with the sword still showed the fatal gash (Ezek. 32:21-32; cf. 28:10; 31:18). Hence wounded warriors committed suicide that they might appear in the other world to have died as heroes (Judg. 9:54; I Sam. 31:4; II Sam. 17:23).

The belief was universal that, under certain conditions, the dead had the power of appearing to the living.<sup>17</sup> When thus appearing,

<sup>16</sup> Charles, *Eschatology Hebrew and Christian*, p. 41.

<sup>17</sup> Lang, *The Making of Religion*, p. 138.

they could speak in audible tones, though with weak and trembling voices that corresponded to their ethereal nature. Thus in the *Odyssey* (xi. 54) the ghosts approach Ulysses "with gibbering cries." Among the Babylonians ghosts frequently appeared in houses and omens were drawn from these manifestations.<sup>18</sup> In the Gilgamesh Epic (tablet xii), the ghost of Eabani comes to Gilgamesh, talks with him, and answers his questions. Among the Arabs ghosts were more easily perceived by animals than by men (a widespread belief; cf. Balaam's ass, Num. 22:23), but they were also seen by men under favorable conditions. They spoke in whispers or in mysterious murmurs in the desert. Their voice was known as *saddâ*, "echo." When they were addressed by the living, they replied out of their graves. When a woman named Laila doubted whether her dead lover could answer her, as he had promised he would do, an owl flew out of his grave and struck her in the face.<sup>19</sup>

In the Old Testament appearances of ghosts are rarely mentioned, because the religion of Yahweh was opposed to necromancy and the cult of the dead; still there is the classical instance of the raising of Samuel (I Sam., chap. 28; cf. Job 4:15). In post-biblical literature apparitions of the dead are more frequently mentioned. Thus in II Mac. 15:12-16 the high-priest Onias and the prophet Jeremiah appear to Judas Maccabaeus on the eve of the battle with the Syrians, and in Josephus (*Ant.*, XVII, 13:4; *War*, II, 7:4) Alexander appears to his widow Glaphyra.

Another general belief of primitive peoples is that the soul continues to maintain a relation to the dead body. When the flesh has disappeared, it clings to the skull or the bones; and when these have vanished, it haunts the grave where its ashes are buried. In Babylonia the *ekimmu*, or "ghost," is constantly spoken of as coming forth from the grave.<sup>20</sup> In Arabia the name *hâma*, "skull," applied to the departed indicates that they were associated with their mortal remains. Many of the Jinn live in graveyards or in regions where all the inhabitants have died. They love decay and foul smells.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Thompson, *Devils and Evil Spirits*, I, xxxv.

<sup>19</sup> Wellhausen, *Reste*, pp. 150 f., 183.

<sup>20</sup> Thompson, *Devils and Evil Spirits*, II, 131.

<sup>21</sup> Wellhausen, *Reste*, pp. 150 f., 157; Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, I, 259, 448.

Among the Hebrews also the soul was believed to retain a close connection with its dead body. The corpse and everything connected with it rendered one who touched it taboo. Originally, as among other primitive peoples, this was a sacred taboo due to the presence of the revered spirits in the body; subsequently, in consequence of the opposition of Yahwism to the cult of the dead, it was regarded as an unclean taboo (e.g., Num. 19:11 P). The cult of the patriarchs and heroes that was carried on at their graves proves that they were supposed still to haunt their bodies. The voice of Rachel weeping for her children was heard in Ramah on the road between Bethel and Bethlehem where her body was buried (Jer. 31:15; Gen. 35:16-20). Similarly, in Mark 5:5, the man possessed by the unclean spirit dwelt among the tombs. Injuries to the body were still felt by the soul. Job 14:21 f., while denying that the dead man cares anything about his sons, yet affirms, "Only for his own body he feels pain, and for his own soul he mourns." Hence mutilation of the corpses of enemies was practiced by the Hebrews as by other ancient peoples (I Sam. 17:51 ff.; 18:25, 27; II Sam. 4:12; 20:22).

This connection of the spirit with the corpse explains the vast importance attached by primitive races to burial. The Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and all other ancient peoples believed that the soul could not rest unless its body were properly entombed (cf. *Odyssey*, xi. 91). Refusal of burial was an injury that was inflicted only upon criminals, or upon the most hated enemies. Violation of a tomb insured the disquieting of the spirit that dwelt within.<sup>22</sup> In the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic (tablet xii, col. 6) the ghost of Eabani says to Gilgamesh: "He whose corpse has been thrown out into the desert—thou hast seen, I have seen it—his spirit resteth not in the earth." By both Babylonians and Assyrians burial was refused to enemies, and their bodies were cast out to be devoured by beasts and birds.<sup>23</sup> The graves of dead enemies were often violated by the Assyrians.<sup>24</sup> Among the Arabs burial was a necessity, without which the soul could not rest. Cremation was

<sup>22</sup> De la Saussaye, *History of Religions*, p. 114.

<sup>23</sup> Stele of Eannatum; *Annals of Ashurbanipal*, IV, 73 ff.; VII, 45.

<sup>24</sup> *Annals of Ashurbanipal*, VI, 70 ff.; see Jeremias, *Die babylonisch-assyrischen Vorstellungen vom Leben nach dem Tode*, pp. 46 ff.



regarded as no less dreadful than the burning of the living body. Only the corpses of enemies were cast out to be devoured.<sup>25</sup>

Among the Hebrews there existed the same horror of remaining unburied. Fathers on their deathbeds solemnly charged their sons not to neglect the last rites (e.g., Gen. 47:30). When the prophet declared, "They shall not be gathered nor buried, they shall be as dung upon the face of the ground" (Jer. 25:33; cf. Isa. 14:18 f.; Jer. 22:19; 36:30), this was a fearful curse. Still more terrible was the thought of being devoured by beasts (II Sam. 21:10; I Kings 14:13; II Kings 9:35 ff.). So dreadful did it seem to refuse burial that this was accorded even to criminals (Deut. 21:22 f.; Josh. 7:24-26), or to those who committed suicide (Josephus, *War*, III, 8:5). Only the bodies of foreign enemies, or of the most heinous offenders were left unburied (I Sam. 17:44; Ezek. 29:5), or were burnt (Isa. 30:33; Gen. 38:24; Lev. 20:14; Josh. 7:15). Violation of tombs and burning of their contents were regarded as terrible calamities (Am. 2:1; I Kings 13:2; II Kings 23:16, 20).

Not merely burial but also burial in the family grave was earnestly desired by the Hebrews. Jacob required of Joseph that he should bury him in the burying-place of his fathers (Gen. 47:30; cf. 50:25; II Sam. 17:23; 19:37; 21:14). Of nearly all the kings of Judah it is recorded that they were buried with their fathers in the city of David; hence the euphemistic expressions for burial, "gather unto one's fathers," "gather unto one's kin," "lie with one's fathers." Exclusion from the family tomb was a severe punishment (II Sam. 18:17; I Kings 13:22; II Kings 21:18; II Chron. 28:27). All this shows that the Hebrews, like other ancient peoples, believed that the soul lingered with the corpse, and that by burial in the family tomb it enjoyed the fellowship of its relatives.

In marked contrast to this conception is the belief expressed in many parts of the Old Testament that the dead live together in a subterranean abode known as Sheol. This idea is not found among the Arabs, nor among several other races allied to the Hebrews; it cannot therefore be primitive Semitic. Other races think of the soul either as remaining with the body, or as going to a realm beneath

<sup>25</sup> Wellhausen, *Reste*, p. 177; Nöldeke, Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, I 672.

the earth, on a mountain top, beyond the ocean, or in the sky. This variety shows that the conception of a spirit-world is secondary, and that the primitive belief was that the soul remained in the neighborhood of the body. This also was doubtless the original Hebrew idea, and the doctrine of Sheol is a later development.

Closely connected with the idea that the ghost haunts the corpse is the idea that it still needs food, drink, and other necessities of life, and that these must be placed either in the grave or upon it. From the earliest times such offerings were deposited with the dead. This custom existed among all the Semitic peoples, and it was found also among the Hebrews. Hebrew tombs in Palestine contain the same sorts of deposits that are placed in the earlier Canaanite tombs, and offerings to the dead are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament (Deut. 26:14; Jer. 16:7; Ezek. 24:17, 22; II Chron. 16:14). All this implies that the dead retain the same needs that they have had in life.

e) *Powers gained by the soul in death.*—Among the Semites, as among other ancient peoples, it was believed that spirits of the dead not only retained the knowledge possessed by them in life, but also acquired new and greater knowledge. The abnormal powers of the subconscious soul, such as crystal-gazing, motor automatism, thought-transference, telepathy, telesthesia, and foreboding of the future, were ascribed to their influence.<sup>26</sup> They were therefore believed to be far wiser than mortals, and they were consulted for guidance in the affairs of life and for oracles concerning the future. Among the Arabs the spirit that revealed himself to a medium was known as *ra'î*, the same word as the Hebrew *rô'eh*, "seer." Among the Hebrews he was known as *yiddê 'ônî*, "the knowing one." When the ghost of Samuel appeared to Saul he predicted to him his impending death and the defeat of Israel (I Sam. 28:19).

Spirits also, although haunting their bodies, were not restricted to them. They could move at will with lightning-like rapidity to any place where they wished to manifest themselves. As a Babylonian exorcism says,

The highest walls, the thickest walls, like a flood they pass.  
From house to house they break through.

<sup>26</sup> See Lang, *The Making of Religion*.

No door can shut them out, no bolt can turn them back.  
 Through the door like a snake they glide,  
 Through the hinge like the wind they blow.<sup>27</sup>

They also possessed the extraordinary power of entering new bodies.

1. They could occupy inanimate objects.—According to primitive theology, spirits could use as their instruments material things, such as sticks and stones, causing in them motion, or endowing them with magical powers. In this case a *talisman* was produced. They could also animate an object by taking up their abode in it. In this case the result was a *fetish*. The idea was widespread that they preferred to occupy images made in the likeness of their former bodies. Thus in Egypt statues of the deceased were multiplied in tombs that his *ka*, or "double," might find abundant opportunity to take up its abode. Among the Arabs a heap of stones, or a standing stone (*nuṣb*=Heb. *maṣṣēbā*), was placed upon the grave, and was believed to be occupied by the dead just as really as similar stones in sanctuaries were occupied by the gods.<sup>28</sup> In Nabataean, Palmyrene, and Aramaic *nejesh*, "soul," means also "tombstone." The Babylonians provided statues at the entrances to temples and houses as residences for the ghosts.<sup>29</sup>

The ancient Hebrews shared this universal belief of antiquity. Heaps of stones were placed over the graves of Achan and of Absalom that their ghosts might remain in them and trouble Israel no longer (Josh. 7:26; II Sam. 18:17). A *maṣṣēbā*, or "standing stone," stood upon Rachel's grave "unto this day" (Gen. 35:20; cf. II. Sam. 18:18). This was doubtless a *bēth-ēl* or "house of deity," as were all the other *maṣṣēbōth* (Gen. 35:14 f.). *Maṣṣēbōth* of this sort must have been the seats of cult of the dead, since no exception is made in their favor in the sweeping condemnation of later legislation (Exod. 23:24; 34:13; Lev. 26:1; Deut. 7:5; 12:3; 16:22). The view of Stade, Schwally, Budde, Holzinger, Nowack, and Charles that the *teraphim* were images of ancestors cannot be demonstrated,

<sup>27</sup> Thompson, *Devils and Evil Spirits*, I, 58.

<sup>28</sup> Wellhausen, *Reste*, pp. 180, 184.

<sup>29</sup> Jastrow, *Die Religion Bab.*, p. 281; see also the representations in Thompson, *Devils*, I, frontispiece, Pl. II, and Rogers, *The Religion of Babylonia*, p. 147.

but is nevertheless exceedingly probable in view of the facts that they were not images of Yahweh (Gen. 35:2, 4, E; cf. 31:19, E), that they represented the human form (I Sam. 19:13, 16), that they were household gods (Gen. 31:30, 34; Judg. 17:5; I Sam. 19:13, 16), and that they were used for obtaining oracles (I Sam. 15:23; II Kings 23:24; Ezek. 21:21; Zech. 10:2). Etymologically the word may be connected with *rephaim*, "shades," or with Bab. *tarpu*, "specter." It is interesting to note that Wisd. Sol. 14:15 connects the origin of idolatry with images of the dead.

2. Spirits could take possession of animals.—So widespread was this belief among primitive peoples that Wilken, Tylor, and other anthropologists have conjectured that it is the explanation of totemism, or the worship of animals as the ancestors of tribes.<sup>30</sup> Among the Arabs ghosts and Jinn frequently appeared in the forms of beasts and birds, particularly of serpents and owls.<sup>31</sup> The same was true in Babylonia.<sup>32</sup> In the Old Testament we find no trace of this belief, unless it be in the list of unclean beasts Lev., chap. 11, and Deut., chap. 14. It is noteworthy that the animals and birds here pronounced unclean are precisely those which the other Semites regarded as most often possessed by spirits. From Exod. 20:4 (cf. II Kings 18:4; Ezek. 8:10) we learn that the early Hebrews worshiped images of animals, which shows that they regarded animals as the abodes of spirits.

3. Spirits could occupy the bodies of living men.—This might take the form either of *obsession*, resulting in disease or insanity, or of *possession*, resulting in the imparting of the higher knowledge, skill, or power of the spirit. This idea was universal in antiquity. The Arabs believed that while the soul was absent in sleep the Jinn could easily take possession of its body. They caused all manner of sicknesses and insanity. The name for "insane" was *majnûn*, i.e., "possessed by Jinn." They were also the causes of remarkable ability and of prophetic inspiration.<sup>33</sup> The Babylonians believed

<sup>30</sup> Crooke, in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, art. "Ancestor Worship," p. 430.

<sup>31</sup> Wellhausen, *Reste*, pp. 152, 157, 185.

<sup>32</sup> Thompson, *Devils*, I, l. 51; Jastrow, *Die Rel. Bab.*, p. 281.

<sup>33</sup> Wellhausen, *Reste*, pp. 155-63.

that the troubled ghost of the unburied, or of one who had died an unnatural death, might enter the body of any person with whom it had established chance relations in life, and might then cause disease and pain.<sup>34</sup> It could be driven out only by powerful incantations in the name of the great gods, and by threats that it should be deprived of food and drink.

Survivals of similar ideas among the Hebrews are seen in the fact that diseases such as leprosy rendered one ceremonially unclean. Being caused by rival spirits, they roused the jealousy of Yahweh, and excluded the sufferer from his cult. In later times they were ascribed to the activity of Yahweh himself, who thus absorbed the functions of the ancient lesser spirits (Num. 12:10; I Sam. 25:38; I Kings 17:20); but, with curious inconsistency, the diseases still remained unclean. The insanity of Saul was due to "an evil spirit from Yahweh that terrified him" (I Sam. 16:14), and such insanity protected a man from injury, because, as in the modern Orient, he was regarded as inspired (I Sam. 21:12-15; 24:7). To stir up trouble between Abimelech and the Shechemites, God sent an evil spirit into them (Judg. 9:23); and in order that Sennacherib might depart, Yahweh sent a spirit into him (II Kings 19:7). In the developed Hebrew theology all extraordinary talents or powers were ascribed to possession by the spirit of Yahweh (Exod. 28:3; 31:3; Num. 27:18; Judg. 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14; I Sam. 11:6); but this idea was due to absorption by Yahweh of the functions of originally independent spirits, as is shown by the survival in the Hebrew language of such expressions as "spirit of wisdom, spirit of might, spirit of jealousy, spirit of error, spirit of deep sleep."

f) *The general estimate of death.*—Because of the powers that have just been described the dead were regarded by all ancient peoples as supernatural beings, to whom the same sort of worship should be paid that was rendered to the gods and to other classes of spirits. The Babylonians prefixed to names of ghosts the determinative for "god," and by the Hebrews also they were known as *elohim*, "gods" (I Sam. 28:13). Yet, in spite of this fact, primitive man did not look forward with any satisfaction to death as an enlargement of his powers. On the contrary, it was regarded by him as an unmixed evil.

<sup>34</sup> Thompson, *Devils*, I, xxxiv.

So important was the body that existence without it seemed shadowy and worthless. Thus in the *Odyssey* (xi. 602 ff.) Achilles says: "I would be a laborer on earth, and serve for hire some man of mean estate who makes scant cheer, rather than reign o'er all who have gone down to death." Death was not a going to the gods whom one had loved and honored in life, but a passing out of the sphere of their care and interest. Their rewards and punishments were distributed in this world. In the other world moral distinctions vanished, and all were reduced to one common level of misery.

The conception of the ancient Hebrew was practically identical. Death seemed to him wholly evil. His one desire was that he might live long in the land, enjoy peace and prosperity, and have numerous descendants. His hope never extended into the other world. Even in late times death was regarded as exclusion from the presence and the care of Yahweh (Isa. 38:18; Ps. 115:16 f.; 6:5 f.; 30:10). Neither rewards nor punishments followed a man into the other life (Job 3:14-19). If, even in the Mosaic religion, the dead were regarded as standing outside of the pale of religion and morality, much more must this have been the belief in the pre-Mosaic age when Yahweh was unknown and many gods were worshiped (Exod. 6:2; Josh. 24:15).

Summing up now this survey, it appears that, while the earliest Hebrews believed in the existence of the soul after death and ascribed to it superhuman powers, yet their idea was so vague, and so destitute of religious or ethical significance, that it can scarcely be called a doctrine of immortality in any true sense of the word. The conception of God needed to be deepened and broadened immensely before an adequate idea of immortality could be formed; nevertheless, these crude beginnings were the foundation on which the structure of a better faith was destined to rise.